

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2092

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, KU

SUBJECT: KUWAITI NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTION RESULTS

REF: KUWAIT A-104

SUMMARY: PRELIMINARY RESULTS JAN 27 ELECTIONS TO FILL FIFTY-SEAT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY INDICATE BOTH LEFTIST AND CONSERVATIVES LOST PLACES TO MOSTLY YOUNGER AND LIBERAL CANDIDATES. NEW ASSEMBLY, WITH ITS EMPHASIS ON NEW FACES AND INTEREST IN CURRENT, MAINLY SOCIAL, ISSUES IS IN EMBASSY'S JUDGEMENT HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT. ASSEMBLY IS LIKELY TO PLAY A MORE POSITIVE ROLE IN GOVERNMENT

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AND HAVE WIDER POPULAR APPEAL. END SUMMARY.

1. WITH RESULTS OF NINE OF TEN ELECTORAL DISTRICTS IN HAND, IT IS SAFE TO MAKE A PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF JANUARY 27 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS. THE FOURTH DISTRICT'S VOTES HAVE YET TO BE TABULATED, BUT THIS IS A CONSERVATIVE, TRIBAL DISTRICT IN WHICH NO LEFTISTS OR LIBERALS ARE RUNNING.

2. OF 45 DEPUTIES SO FAR ELECTED, 24 ARE CURRENT DEPUTIES AND FIVE HAVE SERVED IN PREVIOUS ASSEMBLIES. THERE ARE 16 NEW FACES AND THESE ARE MOSTLY YOUNG AND LIBERAL. SIXTEEN CURRENT DEPUTIES WERE DEFEATED. THE LEFTIST ANM RAN A LIST OF SIXTEEN CANDIDATES, INCLUDING EIGHT CURRENT DEPUTIES. THEY WON ONLY FOUR SEATS, ALL CURRENT DEPUTIES: AHMAD AL-KHATIB, SAMI AL-MUNAYYIS, ABDALLAH QQ-NIBARI AND SALIM AL-MARZUQ. THUS, THE LEFTISTS LOST FOUR CURRENT SEATS, WITHOUT GAINING ANY NEW ONES.

3. LEFT FACED THE SAME PROBLEM AS OLD-TIME CONSERVATIVES WHO WERE DEFEATED, LACK OF APPEAL TO THE YOUNG VOTER WITH NEW IDEAS. IN THE HIGHLY POLITICAL FIFTH, SIXTH, SEVENTH AND EIGHTH DISTRICTS, THE EMPHASIS WAS ON NEW FACES. THE YOUNG, EDUCATED AND ARTICULATE WON. IT IS DIFFICULT AT THIS TIME TO ASSESS THE PERCENTAGE OF OPPOSITION IN THE NEW ASSEMBLY, BUT IT WILL BE GREATER THAN EVER BEFORE. THE NEW OPPOSITION WILL NOT, HOWEVER, BE LEFTIST, IT WILL BE LIBERAL/NATIONALIST. THE RULING FAMILY WILL NOT BE UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THIS. IT WILL HAVE TO BE MORE RESPONSIVE TO SUCH ISSUES AS WOMEN'S RIGHTS, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS. LIQUOR AND EDUCATION, BUT IT WILL NOT HAVE TO FACE RADICAL OPPOSITION.

4. COMMENT: THE NEW ASSEMBLY, WITH ITS EMPHASIS ON NEW FACES AND INTEREST ON CURRENT, MOSTLY SOCIAL ISSUES, IS A HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT. THE GOK WORKED HARD, AND OFTEN BLATANTLY, TO DEFEAT THE LEFTISTS. IT ACHIEVED SOME SUCCESS IN THIS, BUT MANY OF ITS "OWN" MEN WERE NOT ELECTED. THE NEW ASSEMBLY IS LIKELY TO PLAY A MORE POSITIVE ROLE IN GOVERNMENT AND HAVE WIDER POPULAR APPEAL. THE EMBASSY WILL PREPARE AIRGRAM FULLY ASSESSING NEW ASSEMBLY ASAP.
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